National Museum of African American History & Culture
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT & SECTION 106 CONSULTATION

Phase II Archeology

May 30, 2007
Review of Phase I Findings

Archival Research
- Known prehistoric site on the Monument Grounds
- Colonial properties known as Duddington Pasture and Cerne Abbey Manor; passed to Notley Young in 1761; a major slave owner
- Washington City Canal
- Civil War use of Monument Grounds
- Late nineteenth-century landscaping

Geoarchaeological Investigation
- Well preserved natural landscape associated with south bank of Tiber Creek
- Fill deposits of varying thickness

Phase I archaeological survey
- Light scatter of prehistoric material
- Early 19th century domestic deposits
- Possible remains of canal-related structures
The Natural Landscape

NMAAHC site is along the south bank of the Tiber Creek, a broad estuary that was historically modified to become the Washington City Canal and finally the B Street Sewer beneath Constitution Avenue.

Robert King’s *A Map of the City of Washington in the District of Columbia*, 1818.
The Early 19th-Century Landscape

The Monument Grounds remained in pasture through the Civil War, while President’s Park and the Smithsonian Grounds were formally landscaped.

Boschke map shows two possible buildings along the canal.

Phase I survey found possible landscape surface from early 19th century and concentrations of brick rubble that may be related to the structures along the canal.

Detail from Boschke’s Map of Washington City, District of Columbia, 1857
The Landscape from Archeological Perspective

- In the southeast corner of the site, modern grade is equivalent to historic/natural grade
- Introduced fills become thicker toward the south (original channel of Tiber Creek)
- Preserved elements of the natural landscape include upland and marsh muck
Late 19th-Century Landscaping of the Monument Grounds

Phase I survey found possible remains of late 19th century carriageways

Plan of Monument Grounds showing landscaping, and.... circulation and plantings

(NCPC Map reference 807 44-45), circa 1890
Goals for the Phase II Study

Section 106 Process
- Assess NRHP eligibility

Archeological investigation of 3 site components:
- Prehistoric occupation
- Canal-related features
- Historical Use of the Monument Grounds
Archeological Research Questions for Phase II

Archeological Research Questions

• Extent, integrity and significance of the prehistoric deposits?
• Do the prehistoric deposits extend beyond the southeast corner of the site into areas that are now covered with deep fill?
• What is the stratigraphy in the western area of the site? Natural landscape below fill? Historical carriageways?
• Is there intact mid-19th-century landscape surface or structures associated with the Washington City Canal? (northern area of site, along Constitution Avenue)
**Phase II Work Plan**

**Archival Research**
- early records of the Washington City Canal
- Construction and operation of the canal
- Sources of labor (Irish gangs or slaves)
- Funding of the canal (lottery, fines, corporate)

**Field Investigations**
- Existing NPS permit to be amended
- Manual excavations (test units)
- Backhoe trenching
- Restoration of the landscape

**Artifact Analysis & Curation**
- Status of land transfer (NPS or SI)

**Public Interpretation**
Public Interpretation Program

Two Friends Site

Sometimes what archaeologists find closely matches what we think we know about the past, confirming our ideas about how people of different time periods lived. Sometimes, though, what comes out of the ground does not match our preconceptions, and it can be hard to fit the physical data to the history we have been taught. The archaeology of such ambiguous sites can open new windows into the past and force us to think about our ancestors in new ways.

The Two Friends Site was in a corner of a plowed field near the Patuxent River in Charles County, Maryland. A small house stood here between about 1740 and 1790. At that time the property was part of a plantation known as Two Friends that belonged to the Sotterly family. The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) is building a wetland in the field to replace the wetlands filled in during construction along the Route 1 Hughesville bypass. On behalf of SHA, archaeologists from the Louis Berger Group, Inc., excavated the half of the site that was in the construction area. We did not find the house itself. What we did uncover was a group of pits that had been filled in with trash. The trash included wooden artefacts, animal bone, and bottle glass, with some mixture of the other things found in eighteenth-century garbage such as pieces of seashells and tobacco pipe fragments. The animal bone included horns and some other bones that are usually thrown away at a butchering site. We were taken aback by the evidence of cattle, sheep, and goat butchery. The area we dug was probably a workshop or work yard attached to a small dwelling.

WHO LIVED AT TWO FRIENDS?
The Two Friends Site was part of a large plantation, but the site was not large or good enough to have been the location of the plantation big house. Who lived there? The butchered bones suggest that the slaughtering for the plantation may have taken place on the site, so the residents were probably not independent tenant farmers. No window glass was found, which makes one think of slave quarters, but the collection from the Two Friends Site does not strongly resemble collections from other slave-quarter sites. Perhaps the head of household was a favored servant of some kind, such as co-owner. On a few plantation sites, the overseer’s house has seemed midway in status and comfort between the slave quarters and the big house. But however great the legal and social differences between slaves, free blacks, and white farmers in colonial Maryland, it has been difficult to find the archaeological signs of those differences.

THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PAST
It is difficult to assess the Two Friends Site with other colonial archeological sites in the Chesapeake region. It is not a plantation house and does not seem to be a slave quarter, and it has features of both a domestic trash pit and a craft or industrial site. The site presents a confusing assemblage of features that seem to indicate conflicting things about the occupants: the layout of trash near a house with mud and window, burned but not debris, discarded pottery bands but hardly any evidence of clothing. This confusion of categories is the hallmark of evidence about the past.

THE MESSAGE BOARD
The message board at Two Friends is a 3x5-foot fixed outdoor panel, mounted on posts. Location?
Near concession stand?
At 14th & Constitution? Two signs?

Live presentations on site during fieldwork. The message: NMAAHC is coming soon!
This is archeology!
What are we finding?

THE LOUIS BERGER GROUP, INC.
Wrap-Up & Questions/Answers

Work Schedule
- fieldwork in late July (about 3 weeks)
- Draft report in late August

Agency Review & Consultation
- Existing NPS ARPA permit to be amended
- DC SHPO, SI, NCPC + Consulting Parties

Integration of archeology & EIS/NEPA process
- Status of land transfer (NPS or SI)

Other issues
- Status of land transfer (NPS or SI)
- Questions?